

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

***The Foolish Rich Person:
Calculating What's Important in Life
Luke 12:13-21***

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the “Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study”. That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session “Background” located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day’s study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Collect pictures of items which members of your group might want – new cars, electronic items, furniture, jewelry, toys, travel plans. Arrange them so that during the Gathering Time, each person can choose an item.

Bible Study Leader:

Please carefully read the “Note to you as the teacher” included in the Application section of the Teaching Plan. There you will find helpful suggestions for applying the

lesson – rather than the usual application statements which you would usually read or use to ask questions of the group.

Worship Time Leader:

Music Sources:

How Great is Our God, *The Worship Hymnal* #5; CCLI 4348399

Blessed Be Your Name, *The Worship Hymnal* #26; CCLI 3798738

In Christ Alone, *The Worship Hymnal* #506; CCLI 3350395

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***The Foolish Rich Person:
Calculating What's Important in Life*****Focal Text**

Luke 12:13-21

Background Text

Luke 12:13-34

Main Idea

Placing priority on material things rather than on God leaves one unprepared for the coming judgment.

Question to Explore

How is my emphasis on material things affecting my life?

Teaching Aim

To lead participants to evaluate their emphasis on material things in light of Jesus' teachings in this passage.

Gathering together:

Sing **How Great is Our God**

First thoughts:

Collect pictures of expensive items which members of your group might feel were important. These could include electronic equipment, new cars, jewelry, furniture, appliances etc. Have each person choose one of the items. Then ask them to name how the money it would take to buy that item could be used to help someone else.

Say: Today we will look at the sticky issue of storing up material goods. Really, it is a faith issue. Do we really believe God will care for our physical needs as well as our spiritual needs? How do we balance getting and giving?

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

The Foolish Rich Person: Calculating What’s Important in Life

Focal Text

Luke 12:13-21

Background Text

Luke 12:13-34

Main Idea

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Question to Explore

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Teaching Aim

To lead participants to evaluate their emphasis on material things in light of Jesus’ teachings in this passage.

Introduction to your personal study:

What to do with one’s possessions can be a difficult decision. To whom should we leave our money, effects, heirlooms, property etc? The problem can affect all levels of people from the poor to the very rich. A small family treasure could be a means of dispute if two family members want the item. If these affairs are not dealt with it can cause grief to family members and often takes time and money to settle disputes. How are we to deal with material wealth or lack thereof? The parable we will look at deals with riches and how we as believers should view this. We need to remember that riches are not wrong; it is the emphasis on acquiring wealth that is wrong. The important issue is where we place our priority.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

In the scripture between the previous lesson of Luke 11:1-13 and Luke 12:13-34 we find Jesus being criticized for casting out a demon from a man who could not speak (Luke 11:14-16). The crowd was amazed when the man who had been mute spoke. Some of them said that he was able to do this by Beelzebub the prince of demons. Others wanted a sign from heaven. Jesus knows what they are thinking and corrects their misconception.

As Jesus teaches, a woman calls out verse 27 “**Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.**” Jesus makes another correction in verse 28 “**Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.**” Jesus corrected a false relationship. He says that the spiritual relationship of obeying God is higher than that of the human family. He corrects the concept that the physical relationship is blessed and teaches that obedience to God is a closer bond than that of the flesh.

He goes on to challenge their need for a miraculous sign and tells them that one greater than Jonah is here. The people repented when Jonah preached but they would not listen to the one who is greater than Jonah. We have the illustration of the lamp and the parallel to the eye and the fact that it is with the eye that we see. If we go into a darkened room with our eyes open we will not see because we need the light. Christ did not hide the Gospel but proclaimed it like a candle on a candlestick. Jesus came, the light of the world.

When Jesus had finished speaking he is invited to eat with a Pharisee. The Pharisee was surprised when Jesus sat down to eat without performing the ceremonial washing which was the Jewish custom. This washing was ritual and not one that got rid of the dirt. Jesus preaches to them that they are fulfilling all the ceremonial requirements but in 11:42 says: “**...you neglect justice and the love of God.**” One of the teachers of the law takes offence at what Jesus says. Jesus goes on to preach against the attitude they show towards the ordinary people putting burdens on them that they can hardly bear and yet giving them no help. He preaches to the teachers of the law and the Pharisees against the outward show of piety and the lack of spiritual relationship with God.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Luke 12:13. As we move into the focal passage, that of the parable of the foolish rich person, we see Jesus dealing with an interruption. He had been teaching the crowds, verse 1 of chapter 12 says that, “**many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another**”. That is a large number of people. We are used to large

gatherings today, but those gatherings are often monitored by police presence. Certainly, a sophisticated sound system would be needed for a speaker to be heard in such a group. But out of this great crowd someone said to him. ***“Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”***

It seems strange to have this question put to Jesus in the midst of listening to his teaching. We could almost question “Where did that come from?” We are often thrown by questions put to us but Jesus was not. He had been speaking to his disciples that they should not worry about the hypocrites or those who could kill the body. God cares for and feeds the sparrows ***“Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?”*** (12:6). If it is true that God cares for the sparrows, how much more will he care for his disciples. He tells them not to worry about what they will say when they are brought before ***“the synagogues, rulers and authorities”*** (12:11); the Holy Spirit will teach them. Then someone in the crowd asks the question about inheritance and seems to think that Jesus will mediate in the matter.

Inheritance or division of property can be disastrous. It can divide families and ruin personal relationships. The law gave the elder son a double portion of the estate and maybe this man wanted more than his share. Whatever reason this person had in bringing the matter to Jesus we can be sure that material greed was the root cause. He wanted Jesus to intervene.

Luke 12:14. Jesus replies by asking who had appointed him judge or arbiter. He made it very clear that was not his reason for being here. Notice though that he does not ignore the person but proceeds to address the issue.

Luke 12:15. Jesus has what we would call today a “teaching moment”. In a few words he warns the people to watch out and be on their guard against all kinds of greed. Our possessions should not be of the greatest importance – other things, spiritual things matter more. The Living Bible puts it this way. ***“Don’t always be wishing for what you don’t have.”***

Luke 12:16-21. Jesus then goes on to illustrate what he is saying by telling them a parable. There was a rich man who obviously was a good farmer. He knew the soil, planted well and produced a good crop, so much so that he had nowhere to store the grain. The answer in his mind was to tear down his barns and build bigger ones. Now he could store the grain and his goods and take his ease. He was all set for years to come. He could retire, take it easy and eat, drink and be merry. The farmer did not stop to thank God for a bountiful harvest nor did he consider the good he could do with it for the poor. He thinks with the concern of one who did not worry about where the next meal would come from. All he could think about was where he would store it. There was a big “I” in this man’s mind. Notice the ***“my’s”*** – my crops – my barns – my grain – my goods – myself and what will I do.

The parable says that God called him a fool. “A *fool*, in the biblical sense is one who does not believe in God, or if a formal believer, one who conducts his life as *if* there

were no God. For example, Psalm 14:1 and Psalm 53:1 declare: 'The fool says in his heart, there is no God'" (Winterhalter, R. *Jesus' Parables: Finding Our God Within*. New York: Paulist Press, 1993, p. 157.)

The rich man would not have time to do anything about his new found wealth. That night he was going to die. There was folly in even thinking that all this was his.

What we have is loaned to us from God. Without God this man would not have had a bountiful harvest. There is folly in building bigger barns when the barns could burn down or the crop becomes infested with decay. It was folly to think he had time for rest and retirement. There was no time left and who would get all this that he had prepared for himself. Jesus tells the crowd that this is what will happen to those who focus only on material things and have no regard toward God. Matthew 6:19-21, ***"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"***.

Luke 12:22-26. Jesus proceeds to address his disciples about worry. He tells them not to worry about their life – what they will eat or wear for there is more to life than that. Here we find a word picture. He points to the ravens and has them consider the fact that they neither sow nor reap. They do not have storerooms or barns and yet God feeds them. Worrying is not going to add one hour to a person's life so if we cannot do anything about something, why worry at all.

Luke 12:27-31. Jesus changes the scene from birds to flowers and grass. The master story teller brings things from every day life and the things that we see around us and teaches truths. There is such beauty in nature. Jesus tells the disciples to consider the fact that the lilies grow without labour or toil and they are more beautiful than Solomon in all his splendour. (See 1 Kings 10: 14-29 for a description of Solomon's wealth). If God causes the grass to grow how much more will he take care of us? Jesus goes on to say that we need to have our priorities right. We need to seek his kingdom first and everything else will be given to us.

Luke 12:32-34. Don't be afraid. Jesus uses the term ***"little flock"***. He is talking again to his disciples. Here we have different metaphors which merge, that of the Shepherd, the Father and the King. God is pictured here in all three.

Psalm 23 speaks of ***"The Lord is my shepherd."*** and Luke 11:2 is one of various passages which addresses God as ***"Father"***. In verse 31 we are told to seek his kingdom; then Jesus goes on to say that ***"your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom"***. If we seek his kingdom God will give the benefits of the kingdom to us.

Another admonition is found in Verse 33, ***"Sell your possessions and give to the poor."*** It is so important how we invest. Our financial investments are important – we need to be prudent with what we have. But Jesus is saying here that we should bless

others with what we have. True investment is investing in God's kingdom. Our earthly investment can be lost. Banks can fail. Interest rates can plummet. Thieves can steal your money and possessions. Today we even speak of identity theft. But what we invest for eternity is secure. We need to look at verse 34 ***“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*** This is a heart matter. We need to be continually looking to the needs of others and using what we have to reach people with the gospel. We must be about caring for the needs of the poor, lonely, homeless, discouraged and helpless. Often it is the time we invest in the lives of people that brings them into a relationship with Christ.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

We are often advised to prioritize in the workplace or school or at home and to make sure that we balance our budget and have savings. It is so easy to get off track in our day to day living. Setting goals is encouraged – making ‘to do’ lists and working through them. This is all good advice.

What is Jesus saying here? He is not saying that we should not plan for the future and be wise with our material benefits. But we are to always remember that no matter how much material wealth we have we cannot take it with us when we die. This is a heart matter and where our treasure is there will be our heart. What we give of our time, our talents and our money shows where our priorities lie. Jesus is telling us here to make good investments that which will last for eternity. Serving God and helping others will not save us : ***“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works so that no one can boast.”*** (Ephesians 2:8-9). Only acknowledging that we are sinners and receiving Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour can save us. But out of the fullness of that salvation what we do on earth to reach people for Christ is the treasure we lay up in heaven.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

The Foolish Rich Person: Calculating What's Important in Life

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the **Focal Text** in their Bibles. Also, share with them the **Main Idea** to be learned from the Scriptures, and the **Questions to be Explored** by the group.

Focal Text

Luke 12:13-21

Background Text

Luke 12:13-34

Main Idea

Placing priority on material things rather than on God leaves one unprepared for the coming judgment.

Question to Explore

How is my emphasis on material things affecting my life?

Teaching Aim

To lead participants to evaluate their emphasis on material things in light of Jesus' teachings in this passage.

Connect with Life:

Have the group discuss the practical aspects of finances.

Say to the participants: Most of us at some point or other will either receive an inheritance or we will make a will and decide what to do with our effects whether we have much or little. Many of us will have made preparation for our retirement years. Some may have had difficulties when there was no will in place.

Present the question: How is my emphasis on material things affecting my life? Open this for discussion.

Guide the Study:

Request the group to share in reading Luke 12:1-21. Have some of the people take a few verses each to read.

A. Talk about the person from the crowd asking Jesus to intervene in regard to his brother and the inheritance.

1. Ask what they think the problem was with the inheritance being shared.
2. Point out that Jesus made it clear that he had not come as a judge.
3. Have the group reflect on verse 15 where Jesus talks about greed.
4. Ask this: Why did Jesus bring this into focus.
5. Encourage the group to consider what Jesus meant by life and abundance of possessions.

B. Discuss the parable of the foolish rich person.

1. Ask the group whether they think that it is right or wrong to have riches.
2. Take the five statements with my in them in light of the parable and ask what the problem is with each of them. My crops – my barns - my grain – my goods – myself.
3. Guide the group to see that the wealth was not the problem. It was the self-centred attitude to that wealth. The person did not consider sharing with others.
4. Point out that the person planned to retire and live a long time. He stored up all the wealth for the benefit of his own future.

Ask the group to summarize this man's problem in a few simple statements. Offer the first one below to your group as an example.

The person was foolish.

He only thought of himself.

He did not consider eternity.

He only had treasure on earth and had not considered what would happen after he died.

C. Have someone read Luke 12:22-34.

Discuss the passage and have the group talk about worry and the different illustrations which Jesus uses:

Ravens

adding to our life span

lilies

grass.

Have the group reflect on what it means to seek his kingdom. Worship, Service, Giving, Loving God and reaching others with the Gospel could be some suggestions.

Have the group talk about selling your possessions in verse 32.

Suggest that what we have should be used for the kingdom of God.

Help them to realise that it is not that riches are wrong but it is how we view them and use them is what matters.

Help the group to see that we need to have our priorities right. Our time, talents and possessions are given to us by God. Point out that we must put God first and he will provide all that we need. Philippians 4:19. ***“And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”***

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Note to you as the teacher:

There may be people in the group who are struggling with some of the issues that have been discussed in this lesson. Money can be a big stumbling block to people. Help them to see that it is God who supplies all that we have and that we can trust him. Have them to understand that trusting God in every area of our lives is what counts. Let them see that God will call us to account for the things that we have done for him here on earth. Suggest that each day they ask God for guidance that they may witness for Him and point people to Jesus. Make sure that they understand that we do not have to work to be saved.

If you have those in the group who may not know Christ, explain the plan of salvation to them that Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sin. We have to realise that we are sinners who need a saviour. Give them opportunity after the session is over to receive Jesus into their heart and life.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

The Foolish Rich Person: Calculating What's Important in Life Luke 12:13-21

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Yes, Money Is Important!

One of the most important decisions you will ever make is your decision about how you will treat money. Will money be something you must always be making more of? Will how much money you make be your measure of how successful you have been?

What you are doing with the money you have now – your allowance, the money you make at after school jobs, even your gift money – is a good predictor of how you will view money in the future. The fact of the matter is that when we get more money, we want even more money. That's a human reality.

So it takes a real act of will to decide not to be ruled by money. It is a good thing to learn to use money wisely – to budget and to save. It is an even better thing to decide as a young person to spend some of your money on other people. Young people have done some amazing things to meet the needs of others.

Most of all, it is good to remember that God is able to meet all of our needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus.

What are you saving your money for right now? Will that purchase honour God?

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***The Foolish Rich Person:
Calculating What's Important in Life***
Luke 12:13-21**Beginning the Service:**

Sing **Blessed Be Your Name** and then ask for the group to carefully consider the words "In the land that is plentiful where your streams of abundance flow, Blessed be your name" and "When I'm found in the desert place; when I walk through the wilderness, Blessed be your name."

Sing **In Christ Alone**

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

A group of women in Aguascalientes, Mexico is learning to paint little flowers on gift cards. The women are very poor and are using the sale of cards as income. The cards also have a Bible verse that is hand-printed on the card so the ladies are memorizing the verses as they write them. Pray that God's word will touch their hearts and lead them to a closer walk with our Lord.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

My God Shall Supply Your Need Philippians 4:19

Paul ends his letter to the Christians in Philippi with the triumphant affirmation “***And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.***” Paul had learned well the message that Jesus was telling to the crowd in Luke 12. The only way to happiness is to depend on God meeting our needs and He is abundantly able to do that.

A much-loved medical doctor in a small town in Alberta travels several times a year to high altitude regions such as Peru, Tibet and Nepal. He is a mountain climber and recently climbed Mt. Everest. He shared that experience with the community recently. His emphasis, however, was not on his personal achievement, but on the communities in need of medical services to which he has returned year after year. He has begun a private foundation whose goal is to provide local, sustainable solutions to health problems such as malnutrition and tuberculosis.

This man could easily be spending his extra money on fancy hiking equipment, extravagant hotels, and first class travel. Instead, his mountain climbing expeditions are add-ons to medical conventions or a portion of a time spent in giving medical attention to the needy. Even his climb up Mt. Everest involved his being the doctor for the climbing team and his ascent to the summit was delayed by two hours while he attended to a seriously ill guide. Those two hours of delay could have made it impossible for him to reach the summit before his oxygen ran out.

This man seems to have learned how to balance a fulfilling and joyful life with a concern for people. He has used his financial security to serve others.

Jesus longed for us as Christians to understand that it is a poor decision to store up things for oneself and fail to be rich toward God.

Yet, whether we live in a financially secure position or in a hand to mouth situation, we spend much of our time and energy making sure that whatever riches we have are gaining ground.

We easily identify with the farmer who said, “***I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.***”

Dozens of articles about finance; workshops on planning for university for our children or retirement for ourselves; meetings with our financial planner all increase our inner sense of “there is not enough money to do all I want to do; I must get more”. Yet in much of the world, food enough for the day and adequate shelter for the night would be more that they could hope to have.

So the Philippian passage speaks to those who have too much and to those who have too little.

For those who have too much, it reminds that God will supply needs, not wants, and that he will do it in spiritual as well as material ways. It is so very tempting to want to have a financial plan which assures us that we will be able to maintain our present quality of life, pay our medical bills, and have money left over for travel. How much more rewarding it is to experience times when God provides for bills which arise and we learn to depend on Him to meet both financial and spiritual needs.

Hurricane Katrina became a symbol for North Americans of immense destruction. Although other countries often suffer from that kind of destruction, North Americans felt themselves immune. Many people have suffered and continue to suffer. Yet many have found great joy in being helped by strangers who have rebuilt their homes and given them the gift of friendship. God worked through those strangers to meet their needs. His glorious richness in Christ Jesus found expression in the generous giving of time and abilities of other people.

Of course, we all know people who suffer financially. We read of countries who suffer drought and famine and we feel helpless to meet their need. We know of families whose children lack food, medical care and opportunities for study and growth. We ask ourselves how we can help and we do those things we can do to relieve the suffering.

But, we have yet to experience what it would mean if believers all over the world could truly understand that Paul's statement is true for us. ***"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."***

Call to Commitment:

What would happen if the resources we so carefully guard were made available to relieve suffering, give food to the hungry and medical attention to the needy? What if one fifth of the world's population would no longer consume 4/5's of the world's resources? What if landlords no longer raised the rent just because the market allowed them to do so? What if Christians filled not a shoebox, but a warehouse, with gifts for poor boys and girls around the world each Christmas? What if every medical doctor spent a part of his year in areas of the world with little or no medical care? What if Christian churches discovered ways to spend most of their budget in high needs areas away from their church?

What if we really learned to believe that our God will supply all of our needs according to his riches in Christ Jesus?

Concluding the Service:

Sing **Blessed Be Your Name**